



**For immediate release
November 3, 2009**

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DCR PRESENTS RESULTS OF FIVE-YEAR IPSWICH RIVER STUDY TO LEGISLATIVE FORUM

The Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) will present the results of a five-year demonstration project evaluating ways to help reduce stormwater runoff and conserve water in the Ipswich River watershed. DCR will discuss the study's findings on November 4 at a public forum sponsored by Representative Bradford Hill of Ipswich and the Ipswich River Watershed Association.

The forum will be from 10 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. on Wednesday, November 4, 2009, at the State House, Room A-2.

"We are pleased to be able to share the results of this study with the Legislature," said DCR Commissioner Richard K. Sullivan Jr. "While many of the results confirmed what we hoped to be true about these techniques, the study has helped define the extent of the benefits as well as highlight some important limitations, so we can put our resources into the efforts that are most worthwhile."

In 2004, DCR received \$1.04 million in funding from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to implement and evaluate nine innovative pilot projects focused on helping the Ipswich River.

Four of the pilots demonstrate "low-impact development" techniques, which preserve natural areas and allow a developed landscape to manage stormwater in ways similar to an undeveloped landscape. In particular, low-lying planted areas in the landscape are used to filter stormwater and let it soak back into the ground, instead of allowing it to runoff from paved surfaces into sensitive streams and wetlands.

The other five pilots demonstrate innovative water conservation techniques that reduce customer water demand and help ease stress on over-taxed public water supplies.

DCR collaborated with the U.S. Geological Survey, Tufts University, and others to evaluate the effectiveness of the nine pilot projects and used the information to determine which approaches hold the most promise for improving the severe stresses on the Ipswich River.

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While the study focused on the Ipswich Watershed, most of the findings could also apply to other over-taxed streams and water bodies in the state.

“This study gives us a good idea of what we can do to restore the river to health and what actions will be most effective,” said Kerry Mackin, executive director of the Ipswich River Watershed Association. “We appreciate the efforts of all who worked together on this project.”

The alarming condition of the Ipswich River was a critical factor in securing one of only 14 grants awarded nationwide by EPA under this program in 2004. Portions of the Ipswich River and its tributaries frequently experience extreme low-flow conditions, sometimes drying up for miles at a time. The river flows through 21 communities from its sources in Burlington and Wilmington before reaching the sea in the town of Ipswich.

In addition to the U.S. Geological Survey and the Ipswich River Watershed Association, DCR partnered with the towns of Hamilton, Ipswich, Middleton, North Reading, Peabody, Reading, Topsfield, and Wilmington to implement the pilot projects under the grant.

To learn more about the demonstration projects funded by the EPA Targeted Watersheds grants program, please visit

<http://www.mass.gov/dcr/watersupply/ipswichriver/index.htm>

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The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), an agency of the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, oversees 450,000 acres of parks and forests, beaches, bike trails, watersheds, dams, and parkways. Led by Commissioner Richard K. Sullivan Jr., the agency's mission is to protect, promote, and enhance our common wealth of natural, cultural, and recreational resources. To learn more about DCR, our facilities, and our programs, please visit www.mass.gov/dcr. Contact us at mass.parks@state.ma.us.